

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOVIET ARMED FORCES: BREZHNEV
PERFORMANCE, LEADERSHIP INDICATORS, TREATMENT OF STALIN

SUMMARY. BREZHNEV'S FEBRUARY 22 APPEARANCE AND PERFORM-
ANCE WERE IMPRESSIVE. GROMYKO MISSED THE AFFAIR. THE
ONE MENTION OF STALIN DURING USTINOV'S LENGTHY
SPEECH EVOKED APPARENTLY SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE. SUBSTANCE
OF SPEECHES REPORTED SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. BREZHNEV'S PERFORMANCE. ALTHOUGH BREZHNEV'S READING
OF THE GREETINGS, FROM THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP ORGANS TO
THE ARMED FORCES, LASTED ONLY ABOUT TEN MINUTES, HIS
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PERFORMANCE WAS THE BEST WE HAVE SEEN SINCE HIS NOVEMBER
2, 1977 ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF 1917. WHILE BREZHNEV'S PACE WAS SLOW, HIS
DICTION WAS RELATIVELY CLEAR, SLURRING WAS MINIMAL, AND
HIS ENERGY-LEVEL SEEMED NORMAL. CONSIDERING BREZHNEV'S
FULL DAY FEBRUARY 20 (SEPTEL), AND HIS MEETING AND
DINNER SPEECH FEBRUARY 21 (IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASAD

VISIT), HIS APPEARANCE AND PERFORMANCE AT THE FEBRUARY 22 KREMLIN MEETING WERE IMPRESSIVE. AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, THERE WERE NUMEROUS WORDS OF PERSONAL PRAISE FOR LEONID IL'ICH AND HIS NEW "ORDER OF VICTORY" AWARD.

2. LEADERSHIP INDICATORS. GRISHIN, WHO CHAIRED THE EVENT, LED THE SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP INTO THE HALL. THE "ORDER OF ENTRY" FOR THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP WAS GRISHIN, BREZHNEV, KOSYGIN, SUSLOV, KIRILENKO, AND KULAKOV. THANKS TO GRISHIN'S CHAIRING THE MEETING, KULAKOV ON THIS OCCASION WAS SEATED IMMEDIATELY TO BREZHNEV'S RIGHT (AT THE NOVEMBER 2, 1977 KREMLIN MEETING, GRISHIN SEPARATED BREZHNEV FROM KULAKOV ON BREZHNEV'S RIGHT. AS AT THE NOVEMBER 2 GATHERING, THE SEATING TO BREZHNEV'S LEFT WAS GRISHIN, KOSYGIN, SUSLOV, KIRILENKO, MAZUROV, PEL'SHE, AND ANDROPOV (THE LATTER IN HIS GENERAL OF THE ARMY OUTFIT). OF THE MOSCOW-BASED FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS, ONLY GROMYKO WAS ABSENT. OF THE OUT-OF-TOWN FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS, KUNAYEV ATTENDED THE KREMLIN MEETING, WHILE ROMANOV AND SHCHERBITSKIY DID NOT.

3. TREATMENT OF STALIN. USTINOV MENTIONED STALIN'S NAME ONLY ONCE, MERELY NOTING WITHOUT PARTICULAR EMPHASIS THAT FOR MOBILIZATION OF ALL THE USSR'S STRENGTH, A STATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE WAS FORMED, AND "COMRADE STALIN" WAS NAMED CHAIRMAN. APPLAUSE, APPARENTLY SPONTANEOUS, CONFIDENTIAL

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BEGAN AFTER MENTION OF STALIN. REVIEW OF OUR TAPE OF THE SPEECH MAKES CLEAR THAT USTINOV TWICE ATTEMPTED TO CUT THE APPLAUSE BY READING ON, WITHOUT SUCCESS. THE APPLAUSE --WHILE CERTAINLY NOT AN OVATION--LASTED ABOUT TEN SECONDS. PRAVDA'S FEBRUARY 23 ACCOUNT OF THE SPEECH DULY NOTES "APPLAUSE" AFTER STALIN'S NAME. HOWEVER, PRAVDA'S VERSION HAS USTINOV SAYING "I.V. STALIN", WHEN IN FACT HE USED THE SOMEWHAT WARMER AND MORE NATURAL PHRASE "COMRADE STALIN." MATLOCK

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